



the RARA RAG

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February Meeting Features Meteorologist Mark McLean

By Tim Magee, WB2KAO
Larry Wallnau, W2ZEY

Meteorologist Mark McLean will be the guest speaker at the February 4th meeting of RaRa. His presentation is **The Science and Technology of Weather Forecasting**, a topic that is of interest to all, and especially to those of us that have had SkyWarn training.

Mr. McLean works for 13WHAM TV (formerly WOKR). He has a B.S. degree in meteorology from SUNY at Oswego, the same school that *Today Show* weatherman Al Roker attended (and arguably the windiest of SUNY's 64 campuses). Mr. McLean also is an adjunct professor of Weather and Climate at Monroe Community College and belongs to the American Meteorological Society.

His hobbies include horticulture and astronomy (he has a large reflector telescope). Finally, we should be proud that he is a product of our area - he was born and raised in Spencerport.

RaRa MEETING

February 4, 2005

7:30 P.M.

Henrietta Fire Hall #1

3129 East Henrietta Road

**The Science and Technology of
Weather Forecasting by Mark
McLean, WHAM-TV13**

Amateur Radio Exhibit at RM&SC

by Peter Fournia, W2SKY
Education Chairman

It was busy at the Rochester Museum and Science Center's annual Science and Technology Fair. It was also busy at our amateur radio exhibit. Over 1200 museum patrons attended each day and many of these people paused at our exhibit. We exposed hundreds if not thousands of people to amateur radio. The fair operated four days between Christmas and New Years. We exhibited 3 of the 4 days. This was our 8th consecutive year in sharing the hobby and educational aspect of amateur radio.

Our exhibit consisted of an HF station, elementary hands on displays and amateur radio and RARA program brochures. The HF station was led by Ned Asam, W2NED using equipment from the Xerox ARC. Ned prepared 40 meter and 20 meter dipoles that were set up on the museum roof giving us 40, 20 and 15 meter capability. It worked well. Hams who scheduled their time to operate the station were: Ned, Bob Karz K2OID, Doc Weinberg WA6UCY, Ed Gable K2MP, Lia Zwack WA2NFY, Don Dunn AB2NM, Dave Holman KE3HF, and Bill Hopkins AA2YV. Thank you for sharing our hobby with the museum patrons.

(RM&SC continued on Page-5)

SILENT KEY

Raymond G. Haingray, Sr., N2ODN
January 3, 2005

the **RARA RAG**

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RaRa Hotline (585) 442-0587

Website: www.rochesterham.org

Editor.....Dick Goslee, KG2I
24 Elaine Drive, Rochester, NY 14623 (585) 334-1762
Internet: rgoslee@rochester.rr.com

Managing Editor.....Larry Wallnau, W2ZEY
742 Stone Rd., Pittsford, NY 14534 (585) 389-1926
Internet: contax2@rochester.rr.com

Advertising Manager.....Dick Goslee, KG2I
24 Elaine Drive, Rochester, NY 14623 (585) 334-1762
Internet: rgoslee@rochester.rr.com

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OFFICERS:

President: Brad Armstrong, W1YX.....(315) 986-8638
Internet: w1yx@arrl.net
Vice-President: Tim Magee, WB2KAO.....865-0384
Internet: wb2kao@yahoo.com
Secretary: Bill Kasperkoski, WB2SXY.....334-7640
Internet: wb2sxy@arrl.net
Treasurer: George Masny, KA2GPJ.....377-7853
Internet: ka2gpj@arrl.net

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Internet: n2bel@frontiernet.net
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Internet: wlhopkin@naz.edu
Peter Fournia, W2SKY.....377-0535
Internet: pfournia@rochester.rr.com
Doug Howard, KC2KNH.....425-2731
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000PS!

by Dick Goslee, KG2I
Editor, RaRa RAG

Well, I thought my first issue of the RAG went off without a hitch, right up until I didn't get a copy in the mail. Then I got a phone call from another member who lives in the 14623 ZIP code and he didn't get one either. This didn't make sense since a number of people received them the day after they were mailed on December 28th.

It all started to make sense when I went out to my truck on New Years Eve to get a screwdriver, and what do I see, but a brown mail sack way up near the front of the bed. It had slipped off of the pile when I went to the Post Office, and I didn't notice it. I thought I had delivered all 13 sacks, but I had only delivered 12. It was too late that night to go back and they were closed on Saturday for the holidays. So the 13th bag didn't really get mailed until January 3rd.

I have to apologize to those of you who live in some of the smaller 146 Zip Code areas. It was your sack that was temporarily lost. At least it was found and you did eventually get your RAG before the meeting. I can assure you that in the future your editor will do a count of the sacks after he is inside the Post Office. That oversight will not happen again.

February Calendar

- 4 - RaRa Meeting -7:30 PM - Henrietta Fire Hall #1, 3129 East Henrietta Road
- 9 - BARK - 7:00 PM, monthly construction meeting at KC2JKV, 1144 Peck Rd, Hilton
- 10 -RAPS - 7:30 PM, monthly meeting at RIT, Bldg.-76, Room 2150
- 11 -RVHFG - 7:30 PM, monthly meeting at Ogden Town Hall, 269 Ogden Center Rd.
- 15 -RDXA - 7:00 PM, monthly meeting at Gander Mountain, Jay Scutti Blvd.
- 19 -RaRa Testing - Room 2150, Bldg. 76 RIT, Registration 8:30 AM
- 23 -BARK - 7:00 PM monthly business meeting at Seymour Public Library, Brockport
- 28 -RaRa Spring License Class Registration - RIT Bldg. 76, Room 1235, 7:00 PM

Sidebands

"Amateur Radio in the News"

by Larry Wallnau, W2ZEY

A group of hams from India went on a DXpedition to the Andamans, a small archipelago in the Indian Ocean. Gopal Madhavan was enthusiastic about going because it had been nearly 25 years since a ham had operated from the small island chain. He noted that special permission is required from the Indian government to do so. The team of four hams was on the airwaves when the earthquake tremors struck, then their transmission was silenced. Hams who had been receiving the signals had concerns about the team's survival. But after 2 hours, and with every other form of communication down, the team was back on the air and among the first to get word out of the Indian Ocean earthquake and the devastating tsunami that followed. (*The Hindu*, Thursday, 12-30-04)

BPL is making waves, so to speak, on the other side of the Big Pond, too. A report in *The New Scientist*, a highly respected scientific journal, concluded that BPL will adversely affect the radio transmissions of hams. Had BPL been in place, the article states, it could have interfered with tsunami relief efforts of UK-based hams. (*Reuters*, Wednesday, 01-12-05).

Watch Connecticut and New Jersey very closely. Bills are being presented to legislative bodies in these states that are antenna "friendly" to hams. If you care to keep track, the Connecticut bill is designated Senate Bill No. 92 (SB92, introduced by Donald DeFronzo) and the New Jersey counterpart is Assembly Bill 3641 (A3641, sponsored by Linda Stender). (*The ARRL Letter*, Vol. 24, No. 02, 01-14-05)

It's nice to have friends with influence. When Howard Price, KA2QPJ, of New York City's WABC-TV received a copy of the ARRL public service announcement, he made sure it was broadcast. He gave it to Johnny Donovan, the production director of WABC Radio. Mr. Donovan reworked it into a professional announcement and had it aired on the *Rush Limbaugh Show*. (*The ARRL Letter*, Vol. 24, No. 02, 01-14-05)

RaRa Rag 20 Years Ago, February 1985

by Ed Gable K2MP

The program for February, as listed in the *Rag*, was to be a secret. Really. No mention at all except that it would be quite unusual. Having the ability to instantly leap forward in time via my archives, I looked at the March RaRa Rag. Guess what, no mention of the meeting there either. So, it will forever remain a secret. Not a secret of these meetings at the 40/8 Club on University Avenue, were the excellent refreshments served by George Muller, WA2IEO. Ed Holdsworth reported the formation of the spring license classes. The Novice class, including RaRa dues, books and class fees totaled nine-dollars and was held at 111 Westfall Road. The next RaRa VE Exams were scheduled for February 23rd with Al de Blicke KW2X as contact. Other VE team people at this time were: Joe K2YA, Len N2HS, Ed N2EH, Dick KY2Y, Jim N2JC, and Ron K2RJ. Writing for the RRRR, Rochester cop Howie Davies, N2CUN, announced their next meeting would be a demonstration of Police Radar. President Ray Roberts, WA2SSU, penned a nice article entitled *Did You Finish the Job*. There, Ray encouraged those involved with license classes and exam work to follow through and help new licensees get on-the-air. Ed Holdsworth, RACES/ARES Radio Officer, reported on the 1984 ARRL Simulated Emergency Test. The planned scenario involved a twin engine Cessna aircraft crashing into the Pennwalt Pharmaceutical plant on Jefferson Road. Hams were dispatched, by K2JD, to several field locations as well as most all area hospitals and three high school evacuation areas. Twenty-four RACES/AREA members were involved in this highly successful exercise. John Kasprzak, KA2UBX, wrote for the New York Training net (NYTN, 3729 kHz, 8:00 p.m. local) announcing their activity and asking for check-ins for those wishing traffic handling training. K2JD Engraving remained a long term advertiser. From the want ads you could buy a Drake T4XC and R4C for \$300.00 from Herb Haddleton, WA2MST.

March RAG Deadline
February 11, 2005

Rochester Hamfest
June 3-4-5, 2005

On the Demise of Amateur Radio

by Larry Wallnau, W2ZEY

Ever since I got my ticket a year ago, I have heard more than once that ham radio is on the decline – that it draws less interest now than, say, 40 years ago – and even 15 years ago! I have heard this belief expressed by fellow amateurs. It also has been echoed by non-amateurs that have a vague understanding of what we do. When I told a good friend that I was studying for a ham radio license, his reply was “What for? Just use the internet.” Similarly, a family member with considerable knowledge of wireless communications asked “People still do that [ham radio]?”

Any one of a number of reasons has been cited for the ultimate demise of our hobby, besides the rise in popularity of the Internet and cellular communications. However, there is reason to be skeptical. In our small corner of the Earth, amateur radio seems to be far from moribund. It is thriving. Just witness RaRa activities in ARES, community events, repeater maintenance, education in schools and for Explorer Scouts, Skywarn, and so on. The hams in RaRa are busy.

The Actual Data The issue of the current state of amateur radio is an empirical one. That is, gathering data will provide more understanding than will speculation and hunches. A colleague of mine liked to say “you’re a slave to your data.” In other words, regardless of our hypotheses, hunches or gut intuition, one must reconcile data that contradicts one’s suppositions. If the methodology of data collection is not flawed, then one must re-examine his/her hypotheses in the face of evidence to the contrary.

Table 1 consists of raw data compiled by Don Hobson (KB9UMT) and kindly provided to me. The data are in a raw form, in that there is no attempt at statistical analysis other than computing proportions. The table shows the changes in U.S. population, the number of licensed U.S. hams, and the percentage of ham radio operators from 1925-2003 (note that consecutive years are not recorded prior to 1965). At face value, the data reveal a gradual increase in the presence of ham operators, expressed as a percentage of the total population. In the past decade this proportion has reached a stable plateau, rather than drastically diminish as some of us might have expected.

Table 1: Percent of Licensed Hams US

Year	Population	Licensed US Hams	% Ham
1925	115,829,000	16,500	0.01%
1930	123,076,741	19,000	0.02%
1935	127,250,232	45,000	0.04%
1940	132,122,446	55,788	0.04%
1945	139,928,165	62,250	0.04%
1950	152,271,417	81,450	0.05%
1955	165,931,202	144,168	0.09%
1960	180,671,158	227,500	0.13%
1965	194,302,963	265,862	0.14%
1966	196,560,338	268,129	0.14%
1967	198,712,056	278,543	0.14%
1968	200,706,052	275,628	0.14%
1969	202,676,946	277,209	0.14%
1970	205,052,174	279,658	0.14%
1971	207,660,677	278,808	0.13%
1972	209,896,021	274,389	0.13%
1973	211,908,788	268,657	0.13%
1974	213,853,928	271,373	0.13%
1975	215,973,199	268,002	0.12%
1976	218,035,164	283,473	0.13%
1977	220,239,425	311,328	0.14%
1978	222,584,545	350,780	0.16%
1979	225,055,487	374,015	0.17%
1980	227,224,681	393,353	0.17%
1981	229,465,714	398,829	0.17%
1982	231,664,458	408,361	0.18%
1983	233,791,994	416,084	0.18%
1984	235,824,902	433,921	0.18%
1985	237,923,795	438,007	0.18%
1986	240,132,887	433,921	0.18%
1987	242,288,918	442,136	0.18%
1988	244,498,982	455,642	0.19%
1989	246,819,230	459,635	0.19%
1990	249,464,396	466,511	0.19%
1991	252,153,092	494,260	0.20%
1992	255,029,699	524,782	0.21%
1993	257,782,608	575,146	0.22%
1994	260,327,021	614,398	0.24%
1995	262,803,276	656,726	0.25%
1996	265,228,572	661,775	0.25%
1997	267,783,607	677,514	0.25%
1998	270,248,003	676,809	0.25%
1999	272,690,813	677,392	0.25%
2000	275,133,623	682,240	0.25%
2001	275,279,000	684,359	0.25%
2002	276,709,000	685,308	0.25%
2003	278,112,000	687,860	0.25%

The data **do not** suggest that every currently licensed amateur is still active in the hobby. A survey would be necessary to shed light on this question. Such a survey should not draw from a sample of convenience (e.g., ARRL members) because biasing would be likely (that is, ARRL members are more likely to be active hams). It would have to be a random sample of licensed hams from the ULS. Also, specific studies would be needed to determine if the proportion of licensed hams is related to previous reorganizations in the Amateur Radio Service.

Recent Trends As of this writing, data were available through early December 2004. The number of licensed hams stands at 675,283, less than the total for the previous year. This figure might seem alarming. Read on.

Jim Wiley (KL7CC), Chairman of the NCVEC Question Pool Committee was interviewed in the November 2004 issue of *CQ*.¹ He cited findings of a report by VEC Chairman R. C. Smith (W6RZA) that were presented to the NVCEC 2004 meeting last summer. When the FCC restructured the license classes in 2000 from 7 to 3, classes and lowered the CW speed requirement to 5 wpm, there was an increase in the rate of growth among the amateur ranks. (Compare 1999 to 2000 in Table 1) Similarly, there was another increase in growth rate following the terrorist attack on September 11, 2001 which continued until the release of the newest pool of questions for Element 2 (Technician Class) in July 2003. However, the Smith Report notes that at the time of the introduction of the new pool of Technician Class questions, the growth rate of 19.5 new hams per day decreased to 8.2.² Wiley suggests that the decline in growth is not coincidental but a result of the more difficult Technician question pool.

Commentary Should we push the panic button because of the preliminary figure of 675,283 licensed hams for calendar year 2004, a decline from the previous year. Don't bother, at least not yet. This change represents a difference of 1.8% of the number of licensees in 2003, and it includes only partial data for 2004. By the time 2004 data are in, there will probably be a small amount of growth – probably smaller than in the past. And while I do not have 2004 U.S. population figures, the percentage of hams probably will not deviate much, if at all, from the 0.25% of previous years.

What will be interesting for observers of the Amateur Radio Service is how future restructuring will impact growth. The FCC is now considering a number of restructuring proposals. The agency's decisions will be far reaching for future. Restructuring will bring opportunities of research on what draws people to our hobby. For now, it

seems appropriate to borrow a phrase from Mark Twain – News of the demise of amateur radio is greatly exaggerated.

¹Mosenon, D. *CQ* Interviews: Jim Wiley, KL7CC. New Chairman, NCVEC Question Pool Committee. *CQ*. Vol. 60, No. 11 (November), 2004. p. 16-18.

²Note: The figures cited in the Smith report concern *growth rates*, not the actual total of U.S. amateurs, nor actual number of licenses issued per day.

RM&SC continued from Page-1

The hands on display was led by Peter Fournia, W2SKY. It consisted of two magnetic levitation devices, the Radio Coach siren/oscillator kit, the Radio Coach FM wireless mic kit and a computer. The computer was used to display satellite tracking and orbits, the ARRL movie "Amateur Radio Today", and other ham radio related software applications. Hams who scheduled their time with these exhibits were: Peter, Charles Bonfiglio KB2ZFJ, Jim Reilich WB2YJH and his wife Arlene, and Rowan Hawkins KC2KPI.

Exhibiting was fun. It was enjoyable to meet children under 14 years with their parents. The magnetic levitation displays drew children into the exhibit with a question "What's that?" A great way to start a dialog. Their parents and grandparents followed. We explained the exhibits and had a chance to mention the highly varied aspects of the hobby. Parents were enlightened with information about the modern and educational nature of amateur radio. They were referred to the RARA education programs and opportunities to obtain a license. We were pleased by the children's behavior and reminded of their inquisitive nature. For the most part we stood in front of the exhibit and were very engaged with an enjoyable dialog that let us talk enthusiastically about this wonderful hobby.

Most times we had two volunteers; one operating the HF station and one with the hands on display. We would like to have more volunteers to help share the work load. For example, at one time we had three volunteers intensively engaged for a 2 hour period right up to the 4:00 PM closing time.

Thanks again to the volunteers who donated their time and energy to this highly successful and valuable exhibit. Pictures of past RMSC amateur radio exhibits are on our web site inclusive of this years volunteer schedule.

<http://www.rochesterham.org/RMSCdecShow.htm>
Please join us next year, same time same place. It is a very enjoyable and worthwhile experience.

Spring License Class Starts

The spring session of the RARA License Class will begin on Monday February 28, 2005. The class will be held at the RIT Campus, Building 76, Room-1235. Parking is in Lot "F". The first class will begin with signup at 7:00 PM. At that time information will be passed out about class rooms and times during the weekly Monday evening sessions. Classes will continue for approximately 12 weeks and will end in May.

The Technician class will be taught by Allen Skiles, N2VY. The General class will be taught by Edward Martin, K2QP and the Extra class will be taught by Steve Ziblut, WA2EKL and Peter Schuch, WB2UAQ.

The cost for the Technician class is \$31.00 which includes Associate membership in RARA. The cost for the General class is \$20.00 plus membership and the Extra class costs \$28.00 plus membership. Full membership in RARA costs \$15.00 except for Seniors (65 and over) which is \$10.00.

For additional information please see the RARA Web Site at www.rochesterham.org.

SCHOLARSHIP REMINDER

by Jack Tripp, W2JAT

The deadline for submitting applications for the fifth annual RaRa Memorial Scholarship is April 15, 2005. The "Rochester Amateur Radio Association Memorial Scholarship" has been established with generous donations made in memory of "Silent Keys" A. Leland Zwack, W2WPF, William Buchan, W2OMV, William Resch, K4VOS and David Stewart, K2ZCD. The scholarship is available to any licensed Amateur Radio operator who is or will be pursuing any degree of Associate level or higher in any accredited school beyond high school. The individual must be a member of RaRa and a resident of New York State. The scholarship is for one individual for one year, but the applicant may reapply for subsequent years.

Applications for the scholarship may be obtained at RaRa general meetings, by mail at P.O. Box 93333, Rochester, NY 14692-8333 or by calling the RaRa phone at 442-0587. Additional information and a copy of the application are available on the Rochester Amateur Radio Association web site at <http://www.rochesterham.org/> or from one of the officers.

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RDXA Meeting

by Paul Mackanos, K2DB
Vice President, RDXA

The Rochester DX Association will be presenting a program on **Contest Voice Keying and .wav files**. The presentation will be by Rick Mintz, W1TY, and will cover almost everything you would want to know about using voice contesting wave files and software.

The Program will take place at the Membership Meeting of the RDXA, Tuesday, February 15th at 7:00 PM at the Meeting Lodge of the Gander Mountain Store, on Jay Scutti Boulevard in Henrietta, NY.

Ham Radio – An Embarrassing Hobby?

by Larry Wallnau, W2ZEY
RARA Media Communications

Did you happen to read the December 20th issue of *Time* magazine? Lev Grossman wrote a piece on the growing phenomenon of blog websites ("bloggers"), and one blogger in particular, Power Line. In the article, he flippantly, if not irresponsibly, compares bloggers to amateur radio. He wrote:

"Before this year, blogs were a curiosity, a cult phenomenon, a faintly embarrassing hobby on the order of ham radio and stamp collecting. But in 2004, blogs unexpectedly vaulted into the pantheon of major media, alongside TV, radio and, yes, magazines, and it was Power Line, more than any other blog, that got them there."

Derek Bok, former president of Harvard University, once said "If you think education is expensive, try ignorance." While the intent of his remarks was literal, they apply figuratively in this case. Just think of the price we amateurs pay in terms of public image for one highly public and uninformed remark. The fact is, ignorance abounds when it involves what we do as radio amateurs. You know the drill very well – the countless times folks assume we are playing with CB sets, and using "handles" while contributing to road rage on the interstate. Obviously, Mr. Grossman was not a resident of Florida this past August and September. Nor could he possibly be a current resident of tsunami-devastated Thailand, Sri Lanka, or Indonesia.

Rest assured that *Time* is already getting an earful as its post office box fills, so you can put your pen down. The news I have been getting on the ARRL

Public Relations "listserv" indicates the response to the article is strong. But where was the editor's red pencil when Mr. Grossman's copy was reviewed? And if the editorial staff of *Time* displays this level of ignorance, how do we fight it?

I suggest we forget about *Time* and its editors and writers, except to use them as examples of poor journalism. Education and public relations begin on the *local level*. In fact, education and public relations start in one-to-one interactions we have with folks who are not radio amateurs — our neighbors, friends, and new acquaintances. Each one of us should bear some responsibility for letting others know about our hobby and the way it benefits the community. We, in fact, hold the red pencil that will set the record straight.

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